
2025 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends,

I believe I speak for all of us in expressing profound gratitude that our prayers of the past two years have finally been answered. All living hostages have been returned to their families, and for the first time in a long while, there is a real sense of hope that we may be on the path toward lasting peace.

Throughout this period of volatility and uncertainty, APF's response has unconditionally reflected the vision set forth 75 years ago, and the unwavering commitment of the North American healthcare community to Israel demonstrated over decades remains unrivaled.

For more than seven decades, APF has united North American and Israeli healthcare professionals in advancing medical excellence, strengthening emergency preparedness and promoting the exchange of knowledge that sustains Israel's healthcare system in times of peace and crisis alike.

When Israel was attacked by its neighbors in 1967 and again in 1973, APF mobilized American and Canadian physicians and medical professionals to volunteer in Israeli hospitals to stand in for the doctors who had been called to military service at the front.

In recognition of this vital contribution, the State of Israel formally designated APF as the exclusive North American organization to maintain a registry of healthcare professionals willing to serve in Israel during times of emergency. That is a mission that APF continues to fulfill with unwavering dedication.

In the aftermath of the October 7, 2023, attacks, APF launched a series of humanitarian and volunteer missions to support Israel's medical system and ensure its long-term recovery. In those ensuing two years, APF has trained and prepared more than 250 healthcare volunteers who have gone on to provide critical medical and psychological support in hospitals and communities across Israel.

We have also doubled our investment in Israeli medical Fellowships, subsidizing postdoctoral training for more than 40 physicians. In addition, we have provided funding for officers in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Medical Corps to participate in international scientific conferences focused on the unique medical needs of combat soldiers. Further,



through the generosity of former Board of Trustees member Dr. Richard N. Hirsh, we sponsored delegations of Israeli nurses to come to the United States to collaborate on developing advanced pediatric care protocols to benefit children in Israel.

Whether in times of peace, during natural disasters or in the aftermath of terrorist events, we at APF remain dedicated to continuing and expanding our role and ensuring that our work remains relevant and meaningful in advancing medical education, research and patient care in Israel.

If you haven't already made your year-end tax-deductible contribution, there's still time.

On behalf of the APF, I thank you for your generous support in securing the health and well-being of the Israeli population.

Sincerely,

Richard G. Schmidt, MD, MBA
President of the APF

**If you haven't already
made a direct gift or used
your Donor-Advised Fund,
there's still time.**

APF VOLUNTEERS' IMPACT IN ISRAEL

The past two years have tested our resilience in ways we could scarcely have imagined. From the horrific Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023, to the ongoing threats from Iran-backed terrorist groups, APF has stood firm in our mission: to strengthen Israel's healthcare system in times of both crisis and calm.

In 2025, APF sent more than 100 healthcare professionals on several missions to Israel. From solidarity to understanding of the Israeli emergency response system, participants from more than 20 states and four continents have provided critical medical and psychological support to hospitals and communities across Israel.



DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAEL'S NEXT GENERATION OF NURSING LEADERS

This year, APF proudly sponsored a professional delegation to the United States focused on studying the role of the pediatric nurse practitioner (PNP). Led by Dr. Hilla Fighel, director of professional development in the nursing division at the Israel Ministry of Health, the delegation also included Dr. Tmira Hefetz, head of the Mental Health Nursing Department in the Community at Clalit HMO, and Sarah Lewis, head nurse of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Schneider Children's Medical Center.

Throughout their visit, the delegation met with U.S. counterparts, observed clinical practices

and participated in shadowing and professional exchanges, gaining invaluable insights into advanced pediatric nursing models. Their experience will play a vital role in shaping the development and integration of the pediatric nurse practitioner role within Israel's healthcare system.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Richard N. Hirsh and his family for their continued generosity. The Solomon Hirsh Memorial Nurse Education Fund makes it possible to advance nursing education and leadership in Israel, empowering nurses to reach new levels of professional excellence.

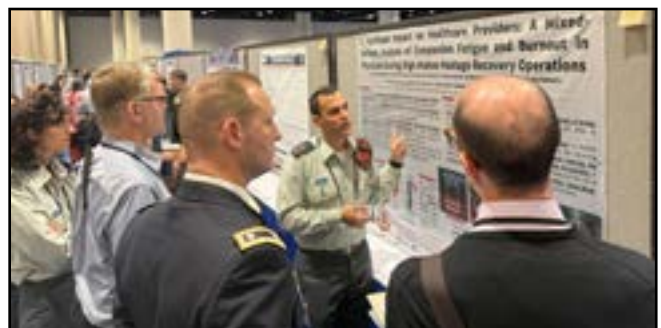
ADVANCING IDF MEDICAL EXCELLENCE

From field hospitals and trauma bays to active combat zones, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Medical Corps continues to provide world-class trauma care under the most challenging conditions, treating mass casualties, stabilizing the wounded and driving innovation in real time.

APF is proud to stand behind the IDF's dedicated medical officers, supporting their participation at the Military Health System Research Symposium (MHSRS)—the world's largest military medical conference. This collaboration ensures that Israeli military medicine remains at the cutting edge of research, training and lifesaving practice.

In August, a delegation of ten IDF medical officers presented their findings, data and hard-earned

insights from Israel's longest and most complex war. IDF Surgeon General Brig. Gen. Dr. Zivan Aviad Beer highlighted pioneering efforts to bring advanced intensive care capabilities directly into the battlefield, ensuring that life-saving treatment could be delivered even at the point of greatest need.



SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ISRAELI MEDICINE

Israel's healthcare system is recognized worldwide for its excellence and innovation, yet it faces a critical shortage of subspecialty physicians. To help address this challenge, APF is supporting more than 40 Israeli doctors and nurses this year in advanced North American Fellowships—training in fields such as intensive care, trauma surgery, anesthesia, oncology, radiology, psychiatry and more.

Beyond the numbers, each Fellow represents a story of professional growth and impact.

"It used to be that stroke patients were the last examined in the ER—now they're the first," says Dr. Ofer Rotschild, a stroke research fellow in neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital. "Much of what was standard therapy during my residency is now outdated. Israel doesn't yet have a stroke-research program equivalent to those abroad, and MGH is one of the best places in the world to train and learn."

"In Israel, general surgeons perform most breast cancer surgeries due to a shortage of breast surgeons," explains Dr. Yossi Dux, a clinical fellow in breast surgical oncology at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. "Here, we have more time, resources and support—an incredible teaching environment. It's an experience I couldn't gain in ten years back home."

These dedicated physicians embody APF's vision, blending skill, compassion, and commitment to elevate patient care across Israel. When they return, their expertise strengthens hospitals and communities nationwide, saving countless lives.

2025-26 APF Fellows

Dr. Zahi Abu Ghosh



Specialty:
**Interventional
Cardiology**

Israeli Institution:
Hadassah University Hospitals
North American Institution:
University of Toronto,
Toronto, Canada

Dr. Ran Abuhasira



Specialty:
Rheumatology

Israeli Institution:
Soroka University Medical Center
North American Institution:
**Massachusetts General
Hospital,** Boston, MA

Dr. Gal Antman



Specialty:
Oculoplastic

Israeli Institution:
Rabin Medical Center
North American Institution:
University of Miami,
Miami, FL

APF Fellows, cont.

Dr. Or Barkai

Specialty: **Breast Oncology**
Israeli Institution: **Rambam Health Care Campus**
North American Institution:
University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Dr. Shachar Daysi

Specialty: **Congenital Cardiothoracic Surgery**
Israeli Institution: **Schneider Children's Medical Center**
North American Institution:
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA

Dr. Farouk Khury

Specialty: **Hip and Knee Reconstruction**
Israeli Institution: **Rambam Health Care Campus**
North American Institution:
NYU Langone Health, New York, NY

Dr. Avihai Moscovici

Specialty: **Oncological Colorectal Surgery**
Israeli Institution: **Shamir Medical Center**
North American Institution:
Lankenau Institute, Wynnewood, PA

Dr. Tal Schlaeffer Yosef

Specialty: **Infectious Diseases (in Cancer)**
Israeli Institution: **Soroka University Medical Center**
North American Institution:
MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX

Dr. Mati Shavit

Specialty: **Interstitial Lung Diseases**
Israeli Institution: **Shaare Zedek Medical Center**
North American Institution:
University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

Dr. Asaf Shemer

Specialty: **Glaucoma**
Israeli Institution: **Shamir Medical Center**
North American Institution:
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

Dr. Ilit Turgeman

Specialty: **Thoracic Oncology**
Israeli Institution: **Lin Medical Center**
North American Institution:
Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA

Dr. Elchanan Zloczower

Specialty: **Rhinology and Skull Base Surgery**
Israeli Institution: **Kaplan Medical Center**
North American Institution:
Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, PA

Dr. Leon Chertin



Specialty:
**Pediatric
Urology**

Israeli Institution:
Shamir Medical Center
North American Institution:
University of Tennessee,
Memphis, TN

Dr. Lev Freidkin



Specialty:
**Interventional
Pulmonology**

Israeli Institution:
Rabin Medical Center
North American Institution:
McMaster University,
Hamilton, Canada

Dr. Ron Gurel



Specialty:
**Hand and
Upper Limb
Surgery**

Israeli Institution:
Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center
North American Institution:
Saint Joseph's Health Care,
London, Canada

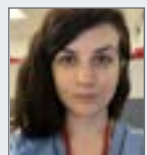
Dr. Eitan Keizman



Specialty:
**Pediatric
Cardiovascular
Surgery**

Israeli Institution:
Chaim Sheba Medical Center
North American Institution:
Columbia University,
New York, NY

Dr. Alona Katzir



Specialty:
**Orthopedic
Trauma
Surgery**

Israeli Institution:
Hadassah University Hospitals
North American Institution:
**UT Southwestern Medical
Center,** Dallas, TX

Dr. Karny Shouchane-Blum



Specialty:
Vitreoretinal

Israeli Institution:
Rabin Medical Center
North American Institution:
University of Alberta,
Edmonton, Canada

2025 NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Sarah Howard, CRNA
Crozier, VA

Sarah Howard is a nurse anesthetist at the University of Virginia and a passionate advocate for Israel. She began her medical career in Canada before emigrating to the United States, where she initially worked in pediatrics at UVA. She later transitioned to the university's medevac helicopter team, serving as a critical-care flight nurse in high-stress, high-risk and rapidly changing environments.

While working as a flight nurse, Sarah earned her doctorate in nurse anesthesia. In 2015, she became one of the first nurse anesthetists to join UVA's pediatric cardiac anesthesia team.

In November 2024, Sarah attended APF's Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Course in Israel. Meeting with Israeli colleagues and witnessing the remarkable resilience of Israeli society was both emotional and life-changing. Observing the close collaboration between Israeli and American professionals inspired her to become more deeply involved with APF. "Being in Israel," Sarah shares, "I simply felt at home."



Joel Policzer, MD
Boynton Beach, FL

Dr. Joel Policzer began his professional journey as a psychology major at Syracuse University before earning a Master of Medical Sciences from the University of Brussels in 1974 and an MD from New Jersey Medical School in 1976. He completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Albany Medical College and Fellowships in Hematology and Medical Oncology at the University of Miami.

After many years in hematology-oncology, Dr. Policzer transitioned mid-career to hospice and palliative medicine. He currently serves as senior medical director for a national hospice provider and teaches end-of-life and palliative care at three medical schools.

A long-time supporter of Israel, Dr. Policzer has visited the country numerous times, both as a tourist and as a volunteer physician at Sheba Medical Center. A member of APF for more than 20 years, he also participated in an APF medical mission to Israel in 2004.



JOIN US IN ISRAEL



SCAN ME

REGISTER NOW
February 15-19, 2026
APF's Solidarity Mission in Israel

Help make a tangible difference in Israel. Join APF for the opportunity to provide immediate relief to the land and the people of Israel

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & THANKS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the hundreds of APF members, donors, and supporters across North America, as well as to our partner sponsors, whose generosity and commitment make the APF Fellowship Program possible. Your continued support enables us to strengthen and expand specialized medical training, fostering excellence in healthcare throughout Israel. Together, we are building a healthier, more resilient future for generations to come.



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